

ATTACHMENT A
Application Serial No. 09/701,948
Clean Version of Substitute Specification

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FLEXIBLE SHEET MATERIAL AND METHOD
OF MAKING SAME

1. This invention is concerned with flexible sheet material and method of making same.

2. In caring for patients in hospital, pressure-sores (often called bed-sores and more correctly known as decubitus) are a potential problem. Additionally patients may also be incontinent or have exuding wounds. To try to protect patients from the risk of pressure-sores and prevent fluid transfer to the underlying mattress and any resulting cross-infection, various sheets or cover sheets have been introduced. Such protective sheets are, of necessity, impermeable to fluids microbes and pathogens. Moreover, to reduce the risk of pressure-sore development, the sheet needs also a certain amount of stretch, thereby reducing interface pressures on the patient's most vulnerable areas.

3. To this end, varying solutions have been proposed, including both "static" and "dynamic" systems. Whereas the static systems may operate as a sprung or foam block mattress with a cover sheet, the dynamic systems are inflatable and often consist of a series of cells, which are sequentially deflated so as to further reduce the interface pressure exerted on the various parts of the patient's body. Such mattresses have been successful in reducing the incidence of pressure sores and inhibiting their progression.

4. A further complication to this issue is that, as a result of the sheet cover being impermeable, the patient's skin can be in direct contact with